United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends mandate of United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador for one month until 30 November.

+ In second meeting today, Council calls on parties in Angola to refrain from any act that might highten tension and jeopardize continued electoral process; extends mandate of United Nations Angola Verification Mission until 30 November.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement read out at third meeting this evening, calls on parties to conflict in Tajikistan to end fighting and welcomes Secretary-General's decision to send goodwill mission and humanitarian assistance team to that country and Central Asia.

+ At fourth meeting, Council condemns attacks by Serb militia in Bosnia and Herzegovina against civilians fleeing from city of Jajce; says violations of humanitarian law will be brought before war crimes Commission.

+ New Special Representative of Secretary-General for Somalia, Ismat T. Kittani of Iraq, to go to that country next week.

+ Actress Sophia Loren appointed Goodwill Ambassador to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; to visit refugee aid centres in Kenya and Somalia.

+ Germany asks whether world can risk another 12-month delay in deciding to draft statute for International Court; China questions feasibility of Court in continuing debate in Sixth Committee.

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The Security Council this afternoon, in the first of four meetings today, voted unanimously to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) for another month, until 30 November. By its resolution, the Council asked the Secretary-General to recommend what mandate and strength ONUSAL would need in order to verify the implementation of the

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final phases of the peace process in El Salvador. It urged the Salvadoran Government and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) to respect scrupulously and to implement in good faith the commitments assumed under the Mexico Agreements and to respond positively to the Secretary-General's latest proposals to them aimed at overcoming the current difficulties.

The Secretary-General dispatched yesterday two senior United Nations officials to San Salvador to discuss with the parties a new timetable for the conclusion of the peace agreements.

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At a second meeting this evening, the Security Council approved the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the existing mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) for an interim period, until 30 November 1992.

The Council strongly condemned the resumption of hostilities by the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and demanded that such acts cease forthwith. It called on the parties to the Peace Accords to refrain from any act that might heighten tension and urged the leaders of the parties to engage in a dialogue without delay so as to enable the second round of the presidential elections to be held promptly.

The Council said it would hold responsible any party which refused to take part in such a dialogue, thereby jeopardizing the entire process, and it reiterated its readiness to consider all appropriate measures under the Charter of the United Nations to secure implementation of the Peace Accords. It strongly condemned the attacks and baseless accusations against the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNAVEM II made by the UNITA radio station, and it demanded that such acts stop immediately.

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Concerned at the continuing deterioration of the situation in Tajikistan, the Security Council today called on all the parties to the conflict to end the fighting and urged the Government of that Republic and the leaders of the parties concerned to begin a political dialogue in order to reach an overall settlement by peaceful means.

In a statement read out by Council President Jean-Bernard Merimeé (France) at a third meeting this evening, the Council welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to send, within a few days, a goodwill mission, including a humanitarian assistance mission, to Tajikistan and Central Asia, in response to requests by the Governments of that region. It also called on parties in neighbouring countries to refrain from any action which might contribute to increasing tension and to impeding a settlement.

The Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation warned in a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 24 October, that the conflict in

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Tajikistan was threatening to escalate into a civil war which would have "catastrophic consequences for the territorial integrity of the Republic and the security of the whole Central Asian region". It asked for international assistance to promote a normalization of the situation there, saying it was particularly concerned over the fate of Russian nationals and the Russian-speaking population in Tajikistan.
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In its final meeting this evening, the Council condemned attacks launched by Serb militia in Bosnia and Herzegovina against civilians fleeing from the city of Jajce and reaffirmed that persons who commit such attacks or order the commission of grave breaches of international law, including the Geneva Conventions, were individually responsible and would be brought to the attention of the Commission of Experts set up to investigate such violations. The Council demanded that all such attacks cease immediately.

The Council took that action by a second statement read out by its President Jean-Bernard Merimée, in which the Council expressed its concern by the continuing conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina with its resultant loss of life and material damage, which threaten international peace and security, and by reports of egregious violations of international humanitarian law by "whomsoever committed".

The Council's action follows the publication of a number of letters addressed to the Council by the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina in which he draws attention to such incidents, as well as of a report issued earlier this week by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, in which he once again calls for an increase in humanitarian assistance to all persons in the affected areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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The Secretary-General has appointed a new Special Representative for Somalia, Ismat T. Kittani of Iraq, to take over after the resignation, earlier this week, of Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun of Algeria. Mr. Kittani will go to Somalia next week to continue the duties of the Special Representative concerning the United Nations relief efforts in that country.

A United Nations official told correspondents today that Mr. Kittani was an "experienced official", and that the United Nations activities in Somalia would move ahead "vigorously and actively". The Secretary-General had written a letter to the Security Council expressing his regret at the resignation of Mr. Sahnoun and saying that he understood the "exceptional difficulties" that he had faced . The Secretary-General wrote that the primary problem in Somalia remained the delays in deployment of forces and that efforts were being made to overcome that problem.

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Italian actress Sophia Loren has been named a Goodwill Ambassador to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). High Commissioner Sadako Ogata will formally appoint her on 18 November, and three days later the film star will set out on a six-day visit to Kenya and Somalia, to help focus public attention on the massive refugee crisis in the region.

"Sophia Loren has expressed great concern for the situation in the Horn of Africa, where a lethal combination of tribal warfare, anarchy and a prolonged drought-induced famine has created one of the worst humanitarian disasters of our time," Mrs. Ogata said.

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The representative of Germany, in his statement to the Sixth Committee (Legal) yesterday, asked if the world community could afford another 12-month delay in deciding whether the International Law Commission should draft the statute for an international criminal court. "The most serious violations of humanitarian law are happening today", he told the Committee as it continued its consideration of the report of the Commission.

On Wednesday, 28 October, the representative of China said the establishment of an international criminal court would not be feasible because States would be loath to surrender or diminish jurisdiction. He said the new climate in international relations would make it hard to guarantee the court's independence and impartiality. States should be able to decide what crimes would fall within the purview of the proposed court, the representative of France said. Austria proposed that the court's jurisdiction be limited initially to crimes identified under existing international conventions.

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